

EDINBURGH CHAMBERS' JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, EDITORS OF "CHAMBERS'S INFORMATION FOR THE PEOPLE,"
"CHAMBERS'S EDUCATIONAL COURSE," &c.

NUMBER 373.

SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 1839.

PRICE THREE HALFPENCE.

LIFE-ASSURANCE.

ALTHOUGH there are about sixty Life-Assurance Companies and Societies in the kingdom, all of which are constantly making strenuous efforts to attract public attention to the peculiar advantages which they have to offer, it is a fact not less true than surprising, that the number of individuals who have availed themselves of life-assurance in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland is not much above eighty thousand. Allowing twenty-five millions to be the population of the empire, and five persons to be the number of each family, it would thus appear that not more than one head of a family out of sixty-two has adopted this means of providing for the helpless beings whom he may leave behind him. If there were other means in abundance of providing for widows and fatherless children, we might be little surprised at this calculation; but when we consider that the case is quite the reverse—that few fathers have property wherewith to provide for a surviving family, that the number connected with the institutions which allow pensions to widows is necessarily small—when we consider, in short, that the great majority of men who have wives and children have nothing but an income depending on their own life and exertions between their families and want—we cannot but conclude that the expedient of life-assurance is either unknown to a large portion of society, or knowingly neglected by them. In either case, a short paper explaining the subject, and enforcing its claims on the attention of husbands and fathers, may be expected to prove in some degree useful.

Life-assurance was not practised in this country till the reign of Queen Anne, when "the Amicable Society" was established in London. At that period no inquiries had been made to ascertain the probable duration of life after any specified age: there was a general notion that life was uncertain at all ages; and, accordingly, for the first fifty years of life-assurance, the charges for insuring a certain sum were the same from all persons under forty-five! In time, however, it became known that a person at, we shall say, thirty, has a chance of living a longer time than a person at forty, and so on; and the consequence was, that, in 1762, "the Equitable Society" of London was established, on the principle of making charges in proportion to the various ages of the parties. Since then, calculations as to the probable duration of life after any certain age have been made with more nicety, so that life-assurances are now, and have long been, transacted on principles of exact justice to individuals, with respect to their ages.

Down to a comparatively recent period, life-assurance was chiefly conducted on the ordinary principles of a mercantile speculation. A company, possessing a large capital, assured sums payable on the deaths of parties, at certain rates, calculating on a profit from their transactions. The sole advantage of this plan lay in the guarantee afforded by the capital of the company. It has since been found that, by the plan of mutual assurance, all desirable security is afforded, while the profits are divisible among the only parties who have any right to them, the assurers. Mutual-Assurance Societies are therefore rapidly supplanting Assurance Companies, most of which will probably in a few years cease to exist. In the present paper, we propose to confine our attention to the plan of mutual assurance.

Mutual assurance proceeds on the following simple principles. While it is an indubitable fact that nothing is more precarious than the life of an individual, seeing that a thousand dangers constantly beset him, it is an equally certain fact that, if we take so large a number as ten thousand persons, or even a smaller number, it is possible to say with almost unerring certainty how many of these will die during the next ensuing year, how many in the next again, and so on, until, at about the age of 100, not one person remains.

Thus Dr Price of Northampton took 11,650 individuals, whose births and deaths were recorded in the proper books at that town, and found that in the first year 3000 died, in the second 1367, in the third 502, in the fourth 335, in the fifth 197, and so on till the last man died at 96. Dr Price consequently assumed that, of any 11,650 individuals who existed in the like circumstances, 3000 would die in the first year, 1367 in the second, and so on. It will be observed that the whole number who die in the first five years is 5401, leaving 6249 then alive: consequently, any one of the 11,650 children, at the moment of birth, had a chance of living five years equal to the proportion which 6249 bears to 5401, or somewhat more than a half. No man could say, at the moment, that any one of these babies would continue alive for three seconds; but yet it was possible to say with some degree of probability that, in the proper circumstances, 6249 of the whole number would live to the commencement of the sixth year. When we go on to an age at which life-assurance is more likely to be effected—say 52—we find that, of 100,000 persons who complete this portion of existence, 3044 will die before the end of the ensuing twelvemonth, so that each man's chance of dying in that space of time is in the proportion of 3044 to 100,000, or about 3 to 100. Now, supposing that these 100,000 persons were each desirous of insuring the payment of £100 to his heirs in the event of his dying during this year, it is evident that if they deposit a sum equal to 3044 times £100, that is £304,400, or about £3. 0s. 10½d. each, they will form a fund sufficient for this purpose, leaving nothing over. We have only to suppose a set of persons of different ages depositing each the sum appropriate to his age, and continuing to do so as long as he lives, and we then have the idea of a Mutual-Assurance Society in all except this—that, generally, instead of paying an increasing sum each successive year, proportioned to the increased risk, it is common to strike a medium in the probable future payments, and pay that from the beginning. Thus, in point of fact, the sum usually required for the assurance of £100 at death, from individuals aged fifty-two, is nearly five pounds.

While Mutual-Assurance Societies are founded upon this basis, they take, from circumstances, another character in addition to that which they hold out to the public. It may readily be conceived that the calculations of the probable duration of lives are liable to be modified by certain contingencies. From climate, and modes of living, there is more health and better expectation of life in some countries than in others. Even in the same country, from improvements of various kinds, the ratio of deaths to the amount of the living inhabitants may be experiencing diminution, so that a man of thirty has the chance of living several years longer than his grandfather had at the same age. In this country, the annual mortality is considerably less in proportion than it was sixty years ago. Consequently, the calculations of Dr Price, forming what are called the Northampton Tables, and which are above adverted to, although they were formed amongst a comparatively healthy rural population, are no longer strictly true. They calculate the chance of life at each particular age too low, and dictate the taking of a too high premium for assurance: in other words, a man at 52 has not in reality a chance of death in the next year equal to the proportion of 3044 to 100,000, but something less, and he should therefore pay less than £3. 0s. 10½d. to assure £100 for a year. Nevertheless, the most of Mutual-Assurance Societies, such as the Equitable of London, and the Scottish Widows' Fund and Scottish Equitable in Edinburgh, proceed upon the Northampton calculations—but for a reason which must be generally approved of. By this plan a considerable surplus takes place, which, at certain intervals, is reckoned, divided, and added to the standing policies, or sums assured, in their respective proportions. It must be evident that this plan, while it

adds to the security of the society, will be perfectly just to all parties, if the divisions of the surplus do not take place at such wide intervals as to leave many policies of short currency unbenefited. The society last mentioned appears to us to make this justice most certain, as it divides the surplus triennially, being the shortest interval in practice. Now, what is the general result of this adherence to a large calculation of mortality, but that Mutual-Assurance Societies become also, as it were, banks for savings! The money deposited there, is not, strictly speaking, parted with. It is put into a stock, where it is sure of being invested to the best advantage—presuming the managers to be honourable and expert men. If the individual die before his proper time, a much larger sum is drawn out by his representatives. If, on the contrary, he live beyond the average, and make payments beyond the amount of the sum originally assured, still, in the long-run, when he dies, his heirs get *not alone that sum*, but *something more*, in proportion to the excess of his payments and the profits made by the investment of the society's funds, lessened only by his contingent for the expenses of the society. In many cases, where a policy was of moderately long standing, it has been found that the sum originally assured has been doubled, or more than doubled, while the premium, or annual sum paid for assurance, had of course sustained no increase.

Such being the equitable and beneficial principles on which Mutual-Assurance Societies are established, it is clear that they present, to men in the enjoyment of income, but possessing little property, a most suitable and favourable means of providing in a greater or less measure for the endeared and helpless relatives who may survive them. That only about 80,000 persons in the United Kingdom should have taken advantage of life-assurance, being but one in sixty-two of the supposed number of heads of families, surely affords a striking view of—shall we call it the improvidence of mankind, or shall we not rather designate it as their culpable selfishness? For what is the predicament of that man who, for the gratification of his affections, surrounds himself with a wife and children, and peaceably lives in the enjoyment of these precious blessings, with the knowledge that, ere three moments at any time shall have passed, the cessation of his existence may throw wife and children together into a state of destitution! When the case is fully reflected upon, it must certainly appear as one of extremely gross selfishness, notwithstanding that the world has not been accustomed to regard it in that light. If, indeed, it were utterly impossible to provide for a widow and orphans, no fault could fairly be found. And, no doubt, the little blame bestowed by the world on this account is owing to the fact, that, till a recent period, no means of providing for these relatives existed. They were in those days invariably left to the mercy of the public. But that this occasioned many evils, we may be abundantly satisfied, from the earnestness with which the founders of Christianity press the duty of succouring the widow and fatherless—one of them representing religion as almost entirely consisting in that benevolent action alone. Assuredly, if there had not been much misery from this cause, there would have been no need for so much urgency on the subject. But if we only consider for a moment how mainly every one is engaged in providing for himself, we must be satisfied of the extreme precariousness of any provision which is expected to come from parties not responsible. It is therefore the duty of every man to provide, while he yet lives, for his own: we would say that it is not more his duty to provide for their daily bread during his life, than it is to provide, as far as he can, against their being left penniless in the event of his death. Indeed, between these two duties there is no essential distinction, for life-assurance makes the one as much a matter of current expenditure as the other. One part of his income can now be devoted

by a head of a family to the necessities of the present; another may be stored up, by means of life-assurance, to provide against the future. And thus he may be said to do the whole of his duty towards his family, instead of, as is generally the case, only doing the half of it.

It may be felt by many, that, admitting this duty in full, income is nevertheless insufficient to enable them to spare even the small sum necessary as an annual premium for life-assurance. The necessities of the present are in their case so great, that they do not see how they can afford it. We believe there can be no obstacle which is apt to appear more real than this, where an income is at all limited; and yet it is easy to show that no obstacle could be more ideal. It will readily be acknowledged by every body who has an income at all, that there must be some who have smaller incomes. Say, for instance, that any man has £400 per annum: he cannot doubt that there are some who have only £350. Now, if these persons live on £350, why may not he do so too, sparing the odd £50 as a deposit for life-assurance! In like manner, he who has £200 may live as men do who have only £175, and devote the remaining £25 to have a sum assured upon his life. And so on. It may require an effort to accomplish this; but is not the object worthy of an effort! And can any man be held as honest, or any way good, who will not make such an effort, rather than be always liable to the risk of leaving in beggary the beings whom he most cherishes on earth, and for whose support he alone is responsible! It may perhaps be thought that we feel strongly on this subject: we own that we do; but if the generality of men saw the case in its true light, they would feel as strongly as we do. They are only comparatively indifferent, because there has as yet been but a brief experience of a system for redeeming widows and orphans from poverty. When life-assurance is as universally understood and practised as it ought to be, he who has not made such a provision, or something equivalent, for the possibility of his death, will, we verily trust, be looked on as a not less detestable monster than he who will not work for his children's bread; and his memory after death will be held in not less contempt.

SCENE WITH A PIRATE.

In the month of July 1813, I was on my way from New York to the island of Curacao, on board the American ship *Patrick Henry*, commanded by Captain Tuttle. We had had a fine passage, and were looking forward to the end of our voyage in about a week. I was the only passenger, and of course was thrown in a great measure on my own resources for amusement, the chief of which was testing the powers of an admirable glass of London manufacture upon every vessel that showed itself above the horizon. Our captain was kind and civil, but there appeared a mystery about him that he did not like to be pried into, and our communication had in consequence been reserved.

In about latitude 20 degrees, and longitude 60 degrees 15 minutes, we were running along with a fine fresh breeze abeam, and all our weather studding-sails set. I was sitting alone in the cabin, ruminating upon the changes of scene and society into which I had been forced so contrary to my inclinations, and wondering whether the happiness of a quiet and domestic life was ever to fall to my lot, when the captain came down and told me that, as I was so fond of using my glass, there was a vessel just appearing on the horizon to windward, and that I might go and see what she was, for he could not make her out at all. I went on deck, and mounted into the main-top, and began my scrutiny. "Well, what is she?" asked the captain from the deck. "I can hardly make her out, but I think she is a schooner." "Ay—what's her course?" "South-west by south, I think; about the same as ourselves." I remained in the top for a few minutes, and continued looking at the stranger. "She seems fonder of the sea than I am," I continued, "for she might have her topsails and top-gallants, and studding-sails to boot, all set, instead of shipping along under her lower sails." The captain made no answer, but was looking hard at her with his eye. I now perceived through my glass a white speck above her foresail, flap, flapping against the mast. "Well, she must have heard me, for there goes her fore-top-sail." The captain now went to the companion for his glass, and after looking attentively at her for a short time, "What's that?" he asked; "is that her square-sail she's setting! I can't very well see from the deck." I looked again: "Yes, 'tis her square-sail; as I'm alive, she's changed her course, and is bearing down upon us." But by this time the captain had mounted the rigging, and was standing beside me; he was eyeing the distant vessel keenly. After having apparently satisfied himself, he asked me to go with him to the cabin, as he wished to talk

with me alone. We descended to the deck, and I followed him to the cabin. He motioned me to take a seat, and after carefully shutting the door, "I rather expect," said he, "that fellow's a pirate." "Pirate!" I asked in alarm. "Yes, I say pirate, and I'll tell you why. In the first place, you see, he'd no business to be sneaking along in that do-little sort of a way, as when we first saw him; who ever, that had any honest business to do, would allow such a fine breeze to go by without showing more canvass than a powder monkey's old breeches to catch it! Next, you see, what the mischief has he to do with us, that, as soon as he clapped eyes on us, he must alter his course, and be so anxious to get out his square-sail! Again, he looks just like one of those imps of mischief, with his low black hull and tall raking masts. But it's no use talking; I tell you he's a pirate, and that's as true as my name's Isaac Tuttle. And now the only thing is, what shall we do! The *Patrick Henry* ain't a Baltimore clipper, and that 'ere devil will walk up to us like nothing. But I'll tell you what strikes me:—If we let them devils aboard, it's most likely we'll all walk the plank; so we'd better try to keep 'em out. We haint got but an old rusty carronade and two six-pounders, and I don't believe there's a ball on board, we came off in such a hurry. Then, there's two muskets and an old regulation rifle down in my state-room; but they haint been fired I don't know when, and I'd as lief stand afore 'em as behind 'em. But our ship's as handsome a looking craft as you'll see; and couldn't we look wicked-like now, and try to frighten that cutthroat-looking rascal?"

I confess I was at first startled at the captain's opinion of the strange sail, and his reasoning left me hardly a hope that his judgment was not correct; but his cool and collected manner impressed me with confidence in his management, and I told him he knew best what we should do, and I would second him as I best could. He walked up and down the cabin twice; then rubbing his hands together as if pleased with his own idea, "I have it," he cried; "I'll just go on deck to put things in order, and in the meantime you'd better amuse yourself looking out your pistols, if you have any; for if he won't be content with a look at us, we'll have to fight."

I hurriedly took my fowling-piece and pistols from their cases, for I fortunately had both; and though I somehow refused to allow myself to believe there would be any occasion for their use, yet I loaded them all with ball, and in each of the pistols put a brace; this done, I went on deck, where I found the captain surrounded by his crew, telling them his suspicions, and his plan of action. "But," said he, "maybe we'll have to fight; if them devils have a mind to try us, they'll send a boat on board, and I want to know if you'll help me to keep 'em off. You see it's most likely they'll make you walk the plank, whether you fight or not, if they get on board; and I calculate, if you do just as I tell you, we'll frighten 'em." There was a hearty "Ay, ay, sir," to this short and pithy harangue. "Thankee, thankee, boys," said the captain; "now we'll not show another stitch of canvass, but seem to take no more notice of that fellow than if we didn't see him; and if he does try to come aboard, then we'll show 'em what we can do."

Our captain was about fifty years old, rather short and stout, but muscular; his face was bronzed with time and tempest, and his locks, which had once been black, were grizzled by the same causes. He was an old sailor and a staunch republican; and as some of his men told tales of fight in which their captain had borne a part, I presumed he had served when a young man in the navies of the obsolescence.

The crew were busy, in obedience to his orders, cutting up a spare fore-top-gallant-mast into logs of about four feet long; these were immediately painted black, with a round spot in the centre of one end, so as to bear a tolerable resemblance to pieces of cannon, and, with two old six-pounders, were placed, one at each port, on our deck, five on a side; but the ports were to be kept closed until the captain gave the order to open them, when they were to be raised as quickly as possible, and the logs thrust out about a foot. A platform was then made on the top of the long-boat, which was fixed between the fore and main masts, and the carronade, or fourteen-pounder, was hoisted up. These things being arranged, the captain went below, and the crew mustered in knots, to wonder and talk of what was to be done.

In the mean time, we had been standing on our course, and had not shifted or hoisted a single sail, but were as if perfectly regardless of the schooner. Not so with her, however; for besides a large square-sail and square-top-sail on the foremast, she had run out small fore-topmast studding-sails, and onward she came, right before a pretty smart breeze, yawing from side to side, at one moment sinking stern foremost into the trough of the sea, as an enormous wave rolled out from under her, and at the next forced headlong onwards by its successor, while a broad white sheet of foam spread out around her, giving beautiful relief to the jet-black colour of her hull, testifying how rapidly she was going through the water. I could not help thinking of the captain's expression, for she certainly did "walk up to us like nothin'," and as there appeared to be not much time to lose, I went down to the cabin to assume my weapons. The captain was there arranging some papers, and a bottle was before him, into which he had put a letter. "May be," said

he, "something'll happen to me; for if them 'ere bloody devils won't be cheated, I will be the first to suffer; and natural enough too, for all the mischief they'll suffer will be by my orders, just because I didn't like to be overhauled like an old tar-paulin by every rascal that chooses to say heave to, in the high seas. But never mind; only, should you escape, just drop the bottle and letter overboard, if you think you can't deliver it yourself."

Now, I had never seriously considered the probability that I might also be killed in an approaching mêlée, for I thought that the captain intended to throw open his ports and show his sham guns, and that, of course, the schooner would take fright. But when he began to talk about death in such a serious strain, I began to feel very uncomfortable; and not being naturally a warrior, I wished myself any where else than on board the *Patrick Henry*. There I was, however, without a chance of escape; and I suggested to the captain that it would be as well for me to put a letter into the bottle also, in case of any accident to both of us, which was agreed to; and we arranged that if either survived and had the opportunity, the letter of the unfortunate should be safely forwarded to its destination. After this little piece of preparation, the captain took me by the hand. "'Tis well," said he; "are you willing to share with me the post of danger? Do not suppose I am unaccustomed to the perils of a sea-fight; no, young man; I've supported the glory of the thirteen stripes in many a gallant action, and have witnessed the death of those honoured and esteemed as the sons of liberty. Yet they were fighting for their country, and it was their duty to hold their lives cheap; but you are a passenger, and should be under my protection—yet I ask you to share my danger. I wish some one to stand by me on the platform, and help me to manage the swivel. Hands are scarce, and I don't know where else to place you." The hardy fellow's eyes glistened as he made the proposal, to which I of course instantly agreed. "Thankee, thankee," he replied, and relapsed into his former character. 'Twas strange; he had always appeared on board his vessel as a common Yankee captain, with little to say, and with a rough uncouth manner but little removed from his men. Yet he at once, though evidently inadvertently, assumed the air and manner of a polished gentleman; and it certainly struck me that the latter character appeared more natural to him than the former. There was evidently a mystery about him, and I determined to find it out when more opportune circumstances should occur.

We went on deck, and the men were still hanging about waiting for the orders of their captain to make them start. These were soon given. The cooper and the carpenter were ordered to bring up all hatchets and other offensive and defensive weapons, and with the muskets and rifle they were distributed among the crew, who received their orders to use them in repelling any attempt to board.

The schooner had now come down within half a mile of us, when she suddenly took down her square-sail, and hauled her wind, to have a look at us. I daresay she did not know what to make of our seeming indifference. Presently a cloud of smoke burst from her side, and a ball came skipping over the water, and passed astern of us. "I thought so," said the captain; "now, lads, show her our stripes." A ball of bunting flew up to the end of our main peak, rested an instant, and fluttered out into the American ensign. The smoke drifted away from the schooner, and she ran up at her gaff the ensign of the Colombian republic. "That's 'ternally the way with them blackguards; they're always making a fool of some republic." Scarcely were the words out of his mouth, when another column of smoke burst from the schooner, and another ball came skip-skippping along towards us, but, catching a swell, it plunged in, and we saw no more of it. "That fellow now, I take it, is a good shot, so we'll not wait for another. Clue up the main-sail, boys; haul aft the weather main-braces; clue up the foresail; luff her, man, luff her a little more—steady," burst from our captain's mouth: the orders were obeyed with the quickness of a well-disciplined crew, and our ship was hoisted. "Now, my lads, take your stations, four to each port on the weather side, but do nothin' till I tell ye." The men took their stations, as directed, round each log on the weather side, and I followed the captain to the platform where our carronade was mounted. It was loaded to the muzzle with bits of iron, musket-balls, lumps of lead, and various other missiles, for the captain had conjectured truly—there were no balls on board. The schooner hove to, and a boat was lowered, and crowded with men. It approached rapidly, pulled by eight rowers. The muzzle of our carronade was depressed as much as possible, and made to bear on the water about fifty yards from the ship. The captain stood with his speaking-trumpet in one hand, and a handspike, with which he shifted the position of the gun as required, in the other. The schooner's boat approached, and was pulling rapidly to get alongside. "Now, sir, keep steady, and obey my orders coolly," said the captain in an under tone. "Boy, fetch the iron that's heating in the galley—run." The boy ran, and returned with the iron rod heated at one end, which was handed to me. "When I tell you to fire, fire, as you value your life and those on board." The captain now put his speaking-trumpet to his mouth, and hailed the boat, which was within a hundred yards of us. "Stop—no nearer, or I'll blow you all out of the water—keep off,

keep off, or, I say, I'll—” At that instant the man at the bows of the boat, who appeared to take the command, gave an order, and a volley from several muskets was fired at us. I heard the balls hit about me, and turned to look for the captain to receive my order to fire. He was on one knee behind the cannon, and holding it by the breech. “Why, captain! what's the matter! are you hit?” He replied, “Nothing—they're coming.” He gave another hoist to the gun, cast his eye hurriedly along its barrel—“Fire, and be quick!” I needed not a second bidding, for the boat was close alongside. The smoke burst from the touch-hole with a hiss, and for an instant I thought the gun had missed fire, but in the next it exploded with a tremendous report, that deafened me. “Throw open your ports, boys, and show them your teeth,” roared the captain through his trumpet, and his voice sounded hideously unnatural. In an instant every port was up, and our guns protruded their muzzles. I had fancied that I heard a crash, followed by wild screams, immediately upon the discharge of the cannon; but the report had deafened me; and the smoke, which was driven back in my face, had so shrouded me, that I could not see; the unearthly shout of the captain had also for the moment driven the idea from my mind, and I now grasped my gun to repel boarders. But my hearing had not deceived me; for, as the smoke was borne away to leeward, the whole scene of destruction burst upon my sight. The cannon had been most truly pointed, and its contents had shivered the hapless boat, killing or wounding almost every person in her. The longest lifetime will hardly efface that scene from my mind. The stern of the boat had been carried completely away, and it was sinking by the weight of the human beings that clung to it. As it gradually disappeared, the miserable wretches straggled forward to the bows, and with horrid screams and imprecations battled for a moment for what little support it might yield. The dead and the dying were floating and splashing around them, while a deep crimson tinge marked how fatal had been that discharge. Ropes were thrown over, and every thing done to save those that were not destroyed by the cannon-shot, but only three out of the boat's crew of twenty-four were saved; the greater part went down with the boat to which they clung.

The whole scene of destruction did not last ten minutes, and all was again quiet. The bodies of those who had been shot did not sink, but were driven by the wind and sea against the side of the ship. From some the blood was gently oozing, and floating around them; others, stiff in the convulsion in which they had died, were grinning or frowning with horrible expression. One body, strong and muscular, with neat white trousers, and a leathern girdle in which were stuck two pistols, floated by, but the face was gone; some merciless ball had so disfigured him, that all trace of human expression was destroyed. He was the pirate captain.

But where was the schooner! She lay for a few minutes after the destruction of her boat; and whether alarmed at our appearance, or horrified at the loss of so many of her men, I know not, but she slipped her foresail, and stood away as close to the wind as possible. We saw no more of her.

The excitement of the scenes we had just passed through, prevented our missing the captain; but so soon as the schooner bore away, all naturally expected his voice to give some order for getting again under weigh. But no order came. Where was he! The musket discharge from the boat, with the unearthly voice that conveyed the orders for the ports to be thrown open, flashed across my mind. I ran to the platform. The captain was there lying on his face beside the gun that he had pointed with such deadly effect. He still grasped the speaking-trumpet in his hand, and I shuddered as I beheld its mouth-piece covered with blood. “The captain's killed!” I cried, and stooped to raise him. “I believe I am,” said he; “take me to the cabin.” A dozen ready hands were stretched to receive him, and he was taken below, and carefully laid on a sofa. “Ay,” he said, “I heard the crash; my ear knows too well the crash of shot against a plank to be mistaken, and my eye has pointed too many guns to miss its mark easily now. But, tell me, is any one else hurt?” “No, thank God,” I said; “and I hope you are not so badly hit.” “Bad enough. But cut open my waistcoat—'tis here.” A mouthful of blood stopped his utterance, but he pointed to his right side. I wiped his mouth, and we cut off his waistcoat as gently as possible. There was no blood; but on removing his shirt, we discovered, about three inches on the right of the pit of the stomach, a discoloured spot, about the size of half-a-crown, darkening towards its centre, where there was a small wound. A musket ball had struck him, and from there being no outward bleeding, I feared the worst. We dressed the wound as well as circumstances would permit; but externally it was trifling—the fatal wound was within. The unfortunate sufferer motioned for all to leave him but me; and calling me to his side, “I feel,” said he, “that I am dying; the letter—promise me that you will get it forwarded—'tis to my poor widow. Well, I've tempted this death often and escaped, and 'tis hard to be struck by a villain's hand. But God's will be done.” I promised that I would personally deliver the letter, for that I intended returning to New York from Curaçoa. “Thank you truly,” said the dying man; “you will then see my Helen and my child, and can tell them that their unfortunate husband and fa-

ther died thinking of them. This ship and cargo are mine, and will belong to my family. Stranger, I was not always what I now seem. But I could not bear that the Yankee skipper should be known as he who once—” A sudden flow of blood prevented his finishing the sentence. I tried to relieve him by change of posture, but in vain; he muttered some incoherent sentences, by which his mind seemed to dwell upon former scenes of battle for the republic, and of undeserved treatment. He rallied for one instant, and, with a blessing for his family, and the name of Helen on his lips, he ceased to breathe.

The body of our unfortunate captain was next day committed to the waves, amidst the tears of us all. Our voyage was prosecuted to an end without further interruption. I did not forget the wishes of the dying man; how faithfully I fulfilled them, and how I have been rewarded, or how satisfactory to me was the previous history of the poor captain, need not be told. Suffice it to say, that I am settled in Elm Cottage, Bloemendaal, and am the happiest son-in-law, husband, and father, in the United States.

BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES.

MRS BRUNTON.

MARY BALFOUR was born in the island of Barra, in Orkney, on the 1st of November 1778. She was descended from a respectable and ancient family, being the only daughter of Colonel Balfour of Elwick, by his wife Frances Ligonier, niece of Field-Marshal Lord Ligonier. Having been brought up in the house of this distinguished nobleman and soldier, the lady of Colonel Balfour had received accomplishments suited to a much higher sphere than that in which her lot was ultimately and permanently cast. These acquirements, however, did not prove useless, for Mrs Balfour was assiduous in conveying as much of them as she retained to her daughter, and thus, undoubtedly, laid the foundation of that elegant and refined taste which the subject of our memoir afterwards evinced. Under her parent's care, Mary became no mean proficient in music, and a good French and Italian scholar; while, in other respects, the excellent natural parts which she appears to have inherited from her mother, were cultivated with equal care and success. Any defects which might have arisen from the indulgent licence, almost inseparable from merely parental instruction, were in a measure remedied by a short residence at school in Edinburgh. Yet much of Miss Balfour's reading, as she emerged from childhood, was dictated by her own choice, and lay in the walks of poetry and fiction. This course of training, while favourable certainly to the growth of original powers, was prevented from being injurious by her native strength of mind and sound sense.

At the age of sixteen, Mary's attention was almost entirely diverted from her studies to matters of a different character. By her mother's death, the charge of her father's household devolved upon her, and for a period of four years the fatiguing details of Orkney housekeeping left little leisure for any other employments. Towards the close of this period, an opportunity was held out to her of changing the sphere in which she had hitherto moved, for a much more brilliant one. The Viscountess Wentworth (who had formerly been the wife of Mrs Balfour's deceased brother, the second Earl Ligonier) invited her god-daughter, Mary, to come to London and reside with her. But Miss Balfour preferred a less dazzling destiny. She had formed an acquaintance with Mr Brunton, a young and talented clergyman of the Scottish established church, and a mutual attachment was ere long the result. In her twentieth year, Mary became the wife of Mr Brunton, and retired with him to the manse of Bolton, a small parish in the county of Haddington, of which he had been recently appointed incumbent.

This important change brought with it a great accession of leisure, and, as a natural consequence, Mrs Brunton's taste for reading returned in all its original strength. The range of her studies widened, and, though she never lost her liking for literature of a lighter kind, the philosophy of mind, history, and other of the graver branches of knowledge, became favourite objects of her pursuit. Altogether, under the kind and able guidance of her new companion, her course of mental improvement was rendered much more comprehensive and methodical. To her acquirements as a linguist, she, at this time, added a little acquaintance with German; and she even made several earnest, though not very successful, attempts to master the science of mathematics. It was natural, also, that the increased incentives and facilities which her present situation afforded, should turn her thoughts more seriously than ever to religion. The issue of the re-examination of the principles of her belief which she entered into, is beautifully expressed by her husband in the memoir prefixed to her posthumous work. “Both in her own mind, and in the minds of her pupils (two East Indian wards whose education she superintended), she was anxious to make religion an *active* principle, to carry its influence habitually into life. It mingled now with all her own pursuits. She sought knowledge, not merely for the sake of the pleasure which it bestowed, but from a strong sense of duty. She loved nature, not for its own beauty alone, but for the traces with which it abounds of the wisdom and the love of the Creator. Her religion was not a religion of gloom. It shed brightness and peace around her. It gladdened the heart which it purified and exalted.”

After a happy residence of six years at the small

but prettily situated manse of Bolton, Mr Brunton's abilities became so widely known, as to procure for him a call to one of the churches of the Scottish capital, and he accordingly removed thither with his lady in the autumn of 1803. Hitherto Mrs Brunton does not seem to have been aware of the powers of her own mind. Her circle of friends had been too circumscribed to furnish her with any striking examples of talent whereby she might measure and estimate her own abilities. To letter-writing, which often gives the first consciousness of a literary turn to its possessor, Mrs Brunton had ever evinced a peculiar aversion, and was thus precluded from another chance of acquiring this species of self-knowledge. In Edinburgh, however, the new and extended circle in which her station called upon her to move, speedily supplied the opportunities which had heretofore been wanting. Mrs Brunton now mingled in the society of persons of known and proved ability, joined with them in conversation and discussion, and, from the part which she found herself enabled to play, acquired by degrees that intellectual confidence necessary to bring her literary powers into light. Still, a considerable period elapsed, after she had left the country, ere she began the composition of her first work, *SELF-CONTROL*; and when she did take up the pen, she appears to have had no definite intention of ever laying her labours before the public eye. But, as the manuscript swelled on her hands, this design began to be entertained, and the more so, it would seem, from a circumstance, which her husband thus relates. “She had often urged me to undertake some literary work; and once she appealed to an intimate friend, who was present, whether he would not be the publisher. He consented readily; but added, that he would, at least as willingly, publish a book of her own writing. This seemed, at the time, to strike her as something, the possibility of which had never occurred to her before; and she asked, more than once, whether he was in earnest.” This suggestion was not without its influence, and after a portion of the novel was written, the warm approbation of her husband, when it was for the first time shown to him, confirmed Mrs Brunton in the intention both to proceed and to publish. From that time forward, she adhered pretty closely to the rule of writing a certain portion daily; but a visit to Harrowgate, which the state of her health rendered necessary, deferred considerably the completion of the work. It went to press, finally, in September 1810, and appeared before the public, anonymously, in the commencement of the following year. It was dedicated to the most illustrious sister-writer of the age, Joanna Baillie.

Good novels were of comparatively rare issue in Britain, and particularly in the Scottish metropolis, when *Self-Control* was published. With the high merits which it undoubtedly possesses, therefore, it is less wonderful that so great a sensation should have been produced by the work, as actually took place. The first edition went off in one month, and a second and third were called for with almost unexampled rapidity. The *sanctum* of Mr Miller, the Edinburgh publisher, then the rendezvous of all the blues and critics, great and small, male and female, of the city, was kept for months in a continual buzz of conjecture, curiosity, and interest, respecting the nameless and unknown writer. Meanwhile, the authoress remained behind her veil, justly proud of her success, and not unmoved by all the criticisms, favourable and unfavourable, which her position enabled her to draw with sincerity from those around her who were not in her secret. Joanna Baillie acknowledged the compliment of the dedication by a letter to the publisher, and to this Mrs Brunton replied in her own name, in a letter which commences as follows:—“No circumstance, connected with the publication of *Self-Control*, has given me half so much pleasure as your very obliging letter—so kind, so natural, so different from the pompous strictures and bombastical praises which have been volunteered on the same occasion. I thank you most heartily and sincerely.” A succeeding portion of this epistle may also be quoted, because in it the authoress gives a fair account of the plan of the work, and apologises in the best way possible for its defects:—“Till I began *Self-Control*, I had never in my life written anything but a letter or a recipe, excepting a few hundreds of vile rhymes, from which I desisted by the time I had gained the wisdom of fifteen years; therefore I was so ignorant of the art on which I was entering, that I formed scarcely any plan for my tale. I merely intended to show the power of the religious principle in bestowing self-command; and to bear testimony against a maxim as immoral as indelicate, that a reformed rake makes the best husband.” The plot, as here and elsewhere admitted by the authoress, is indeed defective in parts; but the lofty tone of sentiment, the pure morality of purpose, the acuteness of observation, and the prevailing eloquence of diction, which characterise it, might well cover greater blemishes, and render *Self-Control* worthy, upon the whole, of the repute which it gained.

In 1812, Mrs Brunton, who had at all times much pleasure in travelling, accompanied her husband on a visit to London. The travellers went by land, and in a short journal appended to the fragment called *EMERLINE*, we find some of the observations made by Mrs Brunton on the journey. These jottings, and others written on a second tour in 1815, prove that she was capable of writing in a style much more lively than that which characterises her larger productions. It was on her return from her first London journey

that the novel of *DISCIPLINE* was thought of, its subject having been suggested by Dr Brunton, who imagined it might be beneficial "to show the means through which, when self-control has been neglected, the mind must be trained by suffering ere it can hope for usefulness or for true enjoyment." Upon a regular plan, formed in consonance with this suggestion, Mrs Brunton's second novel was begun, in the end of 1812. Having projected the introduction into it of a sketch of the manners of the Scottish highlanders, she spent a considerable portion of the following year among that people, adding to the previous knowledge which she had of their various peculiarities. At this very period *Waverley* was published, and our authoress saw the field, which she was preparing to enter, preoccupied by one whom she at once recognised and acknowledged as a master. From pure and unaffected humility, she would now have cancelled the highland part of her own story altogether; but her husband prevailed on her, with much difficulty, to retain it, in the hope that the same objects, sketched by a different hand, would still be found to possess novelty. *Discipline* was published in December 1814, and met with very decided approbation from the reading world. But the applause which it received brought the writer much less gratification, than in the case of *Self-Control*; for the authorship was now no secret, and the sincerity of the praise bestowed was open to doubt.

Discipline, with less energy and beauty in individual parts, is more pleasing as a whole than its predecessor, while it has the same excellence of purpose, and general felicity of style. After its publication, Dr Brunton and his lady made their second tour to England, already adverted to. On their return, Mrs Brunton projected the composition of short tales, having "grown distrustful of her power to combine the incidents of a long-continued narrative," to use Dr Brunton's words. Departing a little, however, from the original plan, she began the story of *Emmeline*. Though this occurred in 1816, and her life was prolonged for a considerable period afterwards, *Emmeline* was never finished. A low fever had attacked her when last in London, and it recurred at home with increased violence. When intervals of tolerable health occurred, many avocations interfered to impede her literary labours. Numerous friends courted her society; she shared the management of public charities was laborious; and, above all, a noble resolution, which she had long adhered to, of investigating personally every case of distress which claimed relief from her, led to extensive and increasing occupation. What with delicate health, and various calls upon her attention, composition was looked upon as a task, and "she rather (says her memorialist) sought reasons to justify to her own mind the desertion of her former habits, than opportunities of renewing them in their strength." In the summer of 1818, however, she appeared to feel a revival of her literary enthusiasm, and, had health and life been spared to her, would most probably have produced something superior to all her former efforts. The power exhibited in the opening of *Emmeline*, the fragmentary tale published by her husband, justifies such an anticipation. But matters were otherwise ordered. No children had as yet blessed the fireside of Dr Brunton and his lady; but, in the course of the year mentioned, Mrs Brunton was evidently about to become a mother. "She was strongly impressed (says Dr Brunton) that her confinement was to prove fatal; not on vague presentiment, but on grounds of which I could not entirely remove the force, though I obstinately refused to join in the inference which she drew from them." Under this impression, she set her house in order, yet with undiminished fortitude and unshaken cheerfulness. When the hour of trial came, her foresight proved but too clear and acute. She gave birth to a still-born son on the 7th of December 1818, and, after seeming to recover partially, was attacked by fever, and died on the 19th of the month.

In private life, the character of this excellent lady presented an exemplary and model to her sex. Her "mind and heart were open as the day." Of her literary powers something has already been said, but her husband's remark seems to us too just not to call for repetition, that "in all she had done, she was only trying her strength," and might have yet more "heightened the standard of female intellect by her labours." Mrs Brunton's novels have now been in a measure cast aside by the passing legionary novelties of the day, but the sifting hand of time will yet separate them from the ephemeral chaff which has followed them, and give *Self-Control* and *Discipline* a place among the sterling fictions which the incipient years of our century have added to British literature. With the Hamiltons and Ferriers of her country will the name of Mrs Brunton be remembered.

We cannot conclude better than by giving an extract from Joanna Baillie's testimony to the virtues of this amiable lady.

No more shall bed-ridden pauper watch
The gentle rising of the latch,
And as she enters, shift his place
To hear her voice, and see her face.
The helpless vagrant, oft relieved,
From her hath his last dole received.
The circle, social and enlighten'd,
Whose evening hour her converse brighten'd,
Have seen her quit the friendly door,
Whose threshold she shall cross no more.
And he, by holy ties endear'd,
Whose life her love so sweetly cheer'd,

Of her cold clay, the mind's void cell,
Hath ta'en a speechless last farewell.
Yes, those who never saw her face,
Nor did on blue horizon trace
One mountain of her native land,
Now turn that leaf with eager hand
On which appears th' unfinished page
Of her, whose works did oft engage
Untir'd attention, interest deep,
While searching, healthful thoughts would creep
To the heart's core like balmy air,
To leave a kindly lesson there—
And gaze, till stain of fallen tears
Upon the snowy blank appears.
Now all, who did her friendship claim,
With alter'd voice pronounce her name,
And quickly turn with wistful ear
Her praise from stranger's lips to hear,
And hark as saintly relics gain'd
Aught that to her hath e'er pertain'd.
Thus wert thou lov'd and priz'd on earth, and now
Fair, disembodied Spirit! where art thou?
The task of love thou had'st to do is done,
And thou art to thy Father's mansion gone.

THE BOY'S COUNTRY-BOOK.

A NEAT and delightfully embellished little volume, thus denominated, has been published by Mr W. Howitt, author of "The Book of the Seasons" and "Rural Life in England." It bears the alternative title of "The Real Life of a Country Boy," and we have no doubt that this country boy is the worthy author himself. The book may be described as the juvenile Bracebridge Hall of the English rural middle classes. It professes to "exhibit all the amusements, pleasures, and pursuits of children in the country"—a delightful idea of a book, and one which, in such hands, could not fail to be well wrought out. Our readers are already aware of our opinion as to boy life in the country, as compared with boy life in town. In a word, we think that it is only in the country that a boy lives—in a large town he merely grows. Towns are the places for men to moid and live in: they are no field for children at all. The present book, reminding us of our own early days in the country, deepens all our previous convictions to this effect. The things of which it treats—sports by flood and field, gossipry by old-fashioned firesides, simple-hearted men and women, the actual objects of nature living and dead, all that immense variety of healthful and amusing occupation and knowledge which falls to the lot of the country boy—are nearly unknown to the city boy, or can only be revealed to him by means of such a book as the present, while all that the city boy learns on the other hand, from his own peculiar opportunities, is not worthy of being spoken of in comparison, and can be acquired afterwards by the country boy in a very short time.

As a means of in some measure enlightening the juveniles of the town as to what is to be enjoyed and learned in the country, this volume is a welcome gift. We know of no book which we should be more apt to select as a present for a young person in whom we might feel interested—for there is a fine moral feeling from simple natural things. A few extracts would probably justify our opinion in the view of most readers, but we have only room for one, on the subject of Horsemanship:—

"I promised to tell my readers how I learned to ride; and I can assure them that the riding-school of a country lad is often a very funny one. The regular riding-master may teach you to ride gracefully, but as to sticking on a horse, commend me to the country lad's riding-school; which is now a common, now a lane, now on ass-back, now on horse-back, now on hog-back, now on cow-back, and not very seldom on the shaggy back of a good thumping mastiff, or the odoriferous cline of a sturdy goat. Any thing that *has* a back, and can move, is a nag for a country lad; and good swinging gates and spinning turnstiles afford him no inconsiderable exercise and instruction in the necessary art of sitting at ease on the ridge of a moving thing, whether with legs or without them. It is a well-known fact, attested by Sir Walter Scott, and other equally great and learned men, that very few people get properly educated that are not more or less self-educated. And the country lad's equestrian education is to a certainty generally well seasoned with this essential quality of self-instruction. From the moment that a boy mounts his father's walking-stick, he is perpetually mounting upon something, from the wooden horse bought at the fair or the toy-shop—a creature very spotted, and very straight-legged—ascending most industriously and adventurously through that interesting scale just alluded to, up to the stout hunter, scouring away in the break-neck steeple-chase. The professional riding-master may tell you that the boy will still need some scientific instructions, such as to mount with ease and grace, to hold your reins properly in the left hand, your whip in the right, to sit with an air, and to put your horse at will into his different paces, or to show off his action; but I tell you that a sharp lad will never be without such instructions where there is one good rider to be seen, and where he has eyes in his head. He will soon be told by the groom as he mounts his pony, or by his father even as he mounts his rocking-horse, how to conduct himself; and as he naturally contracts a pride and a pleasure in riding, he will mark every thing that he sees in a good and graceful rider, and adopt it; and as for sticking fast in his seat, there never were riders

turned out of any school fit to be compared for a moment with those taught in the country lad's school. I can tell you how I learned to ride, and I can tell you too that I have ridden all sorts of horses; and that in all my life, though sometimes riding every day, and then again for some years not mounting a horse more than half-a-dozen times, I never was thrown more than three times in my life, and that was when I was upon hired horses, which, in jockey phrase, had scarcely a leg left to stand upon, and which tumbled with me so unexpectedly and completely as to send me over their heads. In no single instance have I received the slightest hurt, beyond a sprained thumb.

My first horse was, of course, a stick; my second, one of those spotted straight-legged steeds already mentioned; my third, a rocking-horse; and of this particular horse it is difficult to say too much in praise. It is wonderful what horsemanship may be acquired on the rocking-horse. It does that for a lad which is the main thing of all: it gives him confidence. He learns to balance himself, to feel at ease, to hold his whip and bridle, and, in fact, he acquires all the chief principles of this popular science. I have seen children of not more than six and seven years old, on first quitting their wooden horses for their real ponies, mount them with the confidence, and gallop them and leap them across ditches with all the mastership, of grown men.

My next horses were of that miscellaneous class just adverted to. There was a row of turnstiles between our village and the next, which afforded us many an hour's merry practice; three or four lads sitting on one at once, and one or two others twirling them round. Then there was scarcely a gate that we could get open, but it was swinging to and fro with all its, or rather our, might for hours together; then there were see-saws, or queveles, as we termed them, made of a long plank laid across a log, where we experienced many ups and downs in the world in a very little time. And, let it be noted that all this was no despicable practice; the twirling round is a good preparation for a similar rotatory motion in a quadruped steed, which it sometimes takes into its head to treat you to; and the swinging and banging of a good active gate is no bad introduction to those sideward motions of a horse, called shying, or starting away from under you, if you are not a pretty good horseman, at the sight or supposition of something supernatural—such as the flutter of a bird out of a hedge, or the rustle of a leaf, or the taking off of a beggar's hat just in the face of you. We rode very actively, too, on any long strong bough that we could pull down in a tree low enough for us to mount upon—not unfrequently even mounted grave-stones, as a troop of soldiers, just as Bewick has described a set of lads. Of course, there was not an ass that could be caught on the common or in the lanes that was not pressed into our service, and he that can set an ass a-going against his will, and stick on his back too, is no mean rider. Every one that has made the experiment knows, and he only, all the cunning and the tricks of that reputedly stupid animal. First, you are saluted as you approach it with the most admirably directed kicks. Whichever way you approach, you find the tail and heels of the animal presented to you; or if there be several lads endeavouring to hem him up in a corner, without which I hold it a moral impossibility to catch a good knowing ass at all, the head and heels seem to present themselves very wonderfully towards three-fourths of the company, and the rest are treated to those side lunges and open-mouthed snatches, that require the quickest eyes and the nimble heels to get out of the way of.

But suppose the great act of securing and mounting accomplished, the next great act is to move him. Bewick has shown you, in a ragged lad standing at the ass's tail, with a formidable gorse bush very skillfully applied, the most efficacious of all modes of propulsion: but, this once attained, then indeed is the moment of real difficulty. Off goes the ass for a few paces, then backward he goes as fast, then sideways as rapidly—this way, that way, and then down goes his head to the ground, and up go his hind feet into the air. He that can sit through all these evolutions can sit through anything. And, if he has sate through them, let him still be alive, for the next thing will be for the ass to lay himself leisurely down, and as leisurely begin to roll himself over. This is his last resource, if he does not see a pool that he can run into, where he will remain very quietly for at least half a day with his rider; or, if he does not see a good post or trunk of a tree, or a rough hedge, or a wall, that he can deliberately grind the boy's legs against. Cris Newton will remember his experience of wall-grinding as long as he lives.

Besides asses, rams and swine have been occasionally tried by adventurous lads; but I must confess that they never were any favourites of mine. By far the most successful practice that I and my village mates enjoyed, was in riding to the water—a pool about a quarter of a mile off, where they were taken because they had the double advantage there of drinking and getting their legs well washed—the sober set of horses that used to turn the gins or great wheels at the coal-pits. Regularly every summer evening we presented ourselves at the stable-door, and old Samuel Davis, the groom, used to lift us on by the leg, and give us the halter in our hands, for that was all we had to guide them by, and away we went on their bare backs. Now, regular work kept these

horses steady enough, and some of them were grown old in the service: the younger ones had backs as broad and soft as cushions, but Old Jack, a white horse at least twenty years old, had a back-bone as high and sharp as any one would desire to sit upon. Samuel Davis said it resembled most in his mind the riding on a razor. However, we were not particular. There were about half a dozen horses, and, when we set out, one lad on each; but by the time we got to the pool, there were often at least half a dozen lads a-piece on some of the easiest-backed ones; for as we went through the village, every lad came running, crying, 'let me ride,' and 'let me ride'; and up the forelegs of the horses they crept, and were pulled forward by those already on. Sometimes we sat all one way, sometimes the other; that is, sometimes with our faces to the horse's head, and sometimes towards the tail; and sometimes we stood straight up upon their backs, which indeed on Old Jack's back was by far the easiest position. There was one roguish horse, however, Black Bob, that was a bit of a wag, and when we were in the middle of the pool would sometimes begin to paw, and then quietly lay himself down in the water, spite of all our kicks and thumps and cries. When he began to paw the water, there was nothing for it but to bring one of the other horses alongside of him in a moment, and let the lads scramble off Bob's back upon it, or otherwise they were sure of a good ducking; and yet it was odd enough that Bob was as much in request as any horse of them all.

But the day came when Peter Scroggins, the grey pony, made its appearance; and there was an end of mounting gates, stiles, boughs, dogs, or old horses; nay, even a very quiet and ancient cow that I used sometimes to back as I fetched the cows up to be milked, presented no charms. Peter was the horse every where and on all occasions. On one only occasion was he eclipsed, and that was by a most beautiful cream-coloured pony with a fine long tail, which my father bought, when, and where, and wherefore, I know not, except it were that he had somewhere been struck with its extraordinary beauty, and had a notion of substituting it for Peter. My delight in this lovely creature was unbounded; and what delighted me more than all, was to discover that whenever I stopped, it immediately reared up as straight as an arrow on its hind legs. This was to me the greatest amusement; and that every body might see and enjoy this peculiar feat, I rode it up repeatedly into the front of the house, and there let it rear to its full contentment; a measure by which I very likely saved my neck or my bones, for it would probably, before long, have tumbled over with me, and very likely upon me. My father was so much satisfied with what he saw, and my mother so much more so, that the cream-coloured beauty was speedily disposed of, and Peter Scroggins restored to his wonted favour."

JUGGLERS OF INDIA.

THE conversation of a friend, recently arrived from India, enables us to notice one or two of the surprising performances of the jugglers of that country, which, though familiar to persons acquainted with eastern matters, may be new to many readers of these pages.

A party of jugglers came forward on one occasion to perform publicly in the yard of the barracks at Madras. Many hundreds of people, of all kinds, ages, and denominations, including the soldiery of the establishment, assembled to witness the exhibition, and some little temporary arrangements were made, that all might see and hear conveniently. The leader of the jugglers, who were all, of course, natives of Hindostan, requested the commanding officer to place a guard of men around the scene of display—a precaution which was adopted, and which proved a very wise one. The floor of the court, he it observed, was composed of sand, firm and well trodden. On this ground, then, after some preliminary tricks of an inferior kind, one man was left alone with a little girl, the latter seeming about eight or nine years old. Beside them stood a tall narrow basket, perhaps three or four feet high, by little more than a foot in width, and open at the top. No other object, living or inanimate, appeared on the ground. After a short period, spent by the man in conversing with the girl, he seemed to get angry, and began to rail loudly at her for her neglect of some wish of his. The child attempted to soothe him, but he continued to show an increased degree of irritation as he went on. By degrees he lashed himself up into such apparent fury, that the foam actually stood upon his lips, and, being naturally of an unprepossessing countenance, he looked, to the white spectators at least, as like an enraged demon as might be. Finally, his wrath at the girl rose seemingly to an uncontrollable height, and he seized her, and put her beneath the basket; or, rather, turned down the open mouth of the basket over her person. She was thus shut entirely up, the turned bottom of the basket closing her in above. Having thus disposed of the child, in spite of her screams and entreaties, the man drew his sword, which was as bright as the surface of a mirror, and he appeared as if about to wreak some further evil on the object of his ire. And after some moments, during which he talked to himself and to the enclosed girl as if justifying his anger, he did actually at length plunge the sword down into the basket, and drew it out dripping with blood, or at least blood-red drops! The child screamed piteously from her prison, but in vain; for the man plunged the weapon again and again into the scene of her confinement. As he

did so, the cries of the girl became faint by degrees, and in the end died away altogether. The deed of death was consummated!

So, at least, thought most of the horror-struck persons who witnessed this action. And well it was for the chief performer in it that he had requested a guard to be placed, for it required all the exertions of this guard to prevent the aroused soldiery, who believed this to be no trick, but a piece of diabolical butchery, from leaping into the arena, and tearing the man to pieces. The excitable Irishmen among the number, in particular, ground their teeth against one another, and muttered language not very complimentary to the juggler. Even the officers, whose better education and experience made them less open to such feelings, grew pale with uneasiness. But observe the issue of all this.

When the man seemed to have carried his rage to the last extremity, warned, perhaps, by the looks of the soldiery that it would be as well to close the exhibition without delay, he raised his bloody sword for a moment before the eyes of the assemblage, and then struck the basket smartly with it. The basket tumbled over to a side, and on the spot which it had covered, in place of the expected corpse of the girl whose last groans had just been heard, there was seen—nothing! Nothing but the flat sand of the courtyard! No vestige of dress, or any other thing to indicate that the girl had ever been there! The amazement of the spectators was unbounded, and it was, if possible, rendered more intense, when, after the lapse of a few seconds, the identical little girl came bounding from the side of the courtyard—from among the spectators' feet, it seemed—and clasped the juggler round the knees, with every sign of affection, and without the slightest marks of having undergone any injury whatever. As we have said, the astonishment of the assembly was immeasurable; and it might really well be so, seeing that the feat was performed in the centre of a court, every point of the circumference of which was crowded with spectators, whose eyes were never off the performers for one instant. As to the notion of a subterranean passage, the nature of the ground put that out of the question, and, besides, that nothing of that kind existed, was made plain to all who chose to satisfy themselves on the subject, by looking at the scene of the performances when they had closed. Every one was sure that the child had been put below the basket, and that she did not get out of it in the natural way. But she did get out; and how? It is impossible to say, though there can be no doubt that it was accomplished by some skilful manoeuvre.

A somewhat similar feat is occasionally performed with animals. A juggler will place a lean dog below one of these baskets, and presto, pass! when he lifts it up, you will behold a litter of as fine pups as ever whipper-in could desire. But most people will probably think the tree-trick a more wonderful one than any of these. A juggler, in performing this, chooses either a small spot of earth, of the extent of two or three feet square, and in the open air; or he takes a large flower-pot, and fills it with mould for his purpose. Either of the ways will do. Having this small plot of earth before him, and his spectators ranged around, at the distance of two or three feet, the juggler shows to the company a mango stone, or the stone found in the centre of the eastern fruit known by that name, which varies in size from that of an apple upwards. This stone the juggler then plants in the earth, at the depth of several inches, and covers it up. Not many minutes elapse until the spectators behold a small green shoot arise from the spot. It increases visibly in height and size every moment, until it attains the altitude of a foot or so. It then begins to send off branches from the main stem; on these branches leaves begin to appear, bearing the natural hue of vegetation. Buds next present themselves; the whole affair, meanwhile, assuming the regular aspect, in every particular, of a miniature tree, some four feet high. The buds are followed by blossoms, and, finally, the green fruit of the mango meets the astonished eyes of the spectators. "Look, but touch not," is all this time the juggler's word, and he himself also preserves the character of an onlooker. When the fruit has arrived at something like a fair growth for such a tree, the originator of this extraordinary vegetation plucks it, and hands it to the spectators. This is the winding up of the charm. The assembled persons handle the fruit, and see nothing in it in the slightest degree different from the ordinary produce of the mango, elaborated by the slow vegetation of months. Our informant on these points ate a portion of the fruit brought forth by this jugglery, and found it to taste exactly like the raw mango. The whole process, now detailed, usually occupies about a quarter of an hour, from the planting of the stone to the production of the fruit. Though he gives away the fruit, the performer does not part with the tree. This feat, which is perfectly familiar to all who have been in India, is certainly an extraordinary one, and affords the most effectual evidence of the powers of deception to which the race of jugglers has attained.

The feat of sitting without seeming support in the air, is one of the few first-rate Indian tricks which have been exhibited in Europe; but even this is now held somewhat cheap, the mode of performing it being pretty clearly understood. The feat is performed in this way. In the centre of a ring of spectators, stands the juggler with an assistant. When all is ready for

the performance, the assistant holds an ample cloak, or awning, over the juggler, which covers him completely for the time. In a few minutes this covering is removed, and the juggler is discovered, seated cross-legged in air, unsubstantial air, at the height of a foot or so from the ground! He is in the thin dress of his country, and on one of his arms, which is extended horizontally in a bent form, and which, as well as the other, has a wide sleeve upon it, a fold of a cloak is negligently thrown, the remainder of the cloak hanging down to, and resting on, the ground. This slight contact of the elbow with the cloak is all that connects the man with terrestrial things. Otherwise, he is totally left in air; and how he maintains himself there, is inexplicable to appearance. But the cloak alluded to seems to lie in careless contact with another cloak, or portion of attire, that rests on the ground farther off. Now, it is believed that, at the point where the cloak touches the elbow, a spring of a very powerful kind passes up the sleeve of the arm, and bends down under his body, placing him probably upon a hoop. The other end of the spring passes off, and finds its support under the second or farthest off cloak. This spring, in all likelihood, can be folded up into short divisions, so as to be easily concealed while the awning is thrown over the juggler at the close of his performance, and before he gives liberty to the spectators to examine the spot, which he usually does. This is the received explanation of the feat, but there is still some difficulty in understanding the nature of the weight or support which is placed beneath the cloak. This must evidently be of considerable power to sustain his frame; and how he gets it out of the way, is not easily seen. These feats are the result of surprising art, address, or contrivance; and for such, the natives of India certainly far excel the whole world.

A FEW WEEKS ON THE CONTINENT.

ANTWERP, GHEENT, OSTEND—RETURN TO ENGLAND.

HAVING spent a few days agreeably in the Belgian capital, we proceeded on our route to Ostend, by way of Antwerp, in which we designed to spend a day in passing. Our journey to Antwerp was speedily performed by means of the railway train, which in less than a couple of hours brought us to the place of our destination.

In travelling from Brussels to Antwerp we proceed in a northerly direction, passing through the pleasantly situated and thriving town of Mechlin or Malines, celebrated for its manufactures of lace. After quitting Malines, we are made sensible of approaching the low-lying coast of the country. The land assumes all the appearance of polders reclaimed from the sea, the ditches are full of water, and canals are seen on the tops of the broad mounds or dykes. Rich green fields devoted to the pasturing of cattle, the neat farm steadings of the Flemish peasants, and church steeples projecting from the midst of clumps of leafy trees, all serve to remind us of Holland. The first indication we have of approaching Antwerp, is the sight of the tall Gothic tower of the cathedral, rising from the verdant plain before us. The town itself is concealed from view till we are close upon it, by a number of outflanking bulwarks, in the form of high grassy mounds.

Antwerp, or Anvers, as it is called by the French and Belgians, is strongly guarded on the east and south by high walls and deep wet ditches; on the west it has the fortification called the citadel, and on the north it is bounded by the Scheldt, a river as broad as the Thames at Blackwall, and as capable of navigation. The Scheldt, after passing the town, flows in a northerly direction to the sea at Flushing—a distance of sixty-two miles. The whole country around is perfectly flat. Immediately opposite Antwerp, on the left bank of the river, stand a few houses, fortified by walls, and forming a station for a ferry: this is the Tête de Flandre. Behind this fortified station there is a large flat expanse of land, bare, brown, and marshy, and which could be easily flooded. Plantations of trees border the horizon in the distance.

The interior of Antwerp consists of generally narrow streets, lined with high houses of a sombre antique appearance, and obviously built according to the old Spanish taste. In niches on the projecting angles of some of the houses forming the corners of the streets, are seen large gilt wooden figures of the Virgin and Child, which may be assumed as an evidence that the town is purely Roman Catholic. It was the first time we had observed such representations in the open thoroughfares in Belgium, and we learned that they were generally falling into a state of neglect. Nothing of the kind, at least, was seen by us in Brussels. Some of the streets contain houses of a modern architecture, and there are some good shops; but the air of the whole place is decidedly prison-like and monastic. We observed that many windows were stanchioned with iron bars, and that some of the doors of the houses had small open-

ings in them, covered with gratings, through which the inmates could spy those who demanded admittance, and thus protect themselves from violent intrusion. Antwerp has been so frequently attacked and taken possession of by Spaniards, French, English, and Dutch, that these, and such like evidences of a state of turbulence, can excite no surprise. I know of few towns in western Europe which have suffered so much from war as Antwerp. Previous to the disastrous reign of Philip II., it was the greatest commercial city in the world. From two to three thousand vessels were constantly in the Scheldt, loading and unloading cargoes of goods, five hundred waggons entered the gates daily, and the inhabitants amounted to 200,000 in number. The dreadful severities of Alva drove thousands of the merchants and artisans to England; and when the Dutch finally made their peace with Spain in 1648, the last great blow was given to the trade of the town, it being then settled that the Scheldt should in future be closed against the entrance of shipping. After this, Antwerp dwindled down to the condition of a poor neglected town, known only for its churches and the pictures which ornamented them. Napoleon, having conceived the plan of making Antwerp the greatest of the French naval arsenals in the northern part of his empire, if not a rival of the port of London, for both of which it was eminently suited, greatly improved the town by constructing a beautiful quay along the bank of the river, also two large docks for the reception of shipping, and a complete suite of ship-building yards, an arsenal, and other important accommodations. At the peace of 1814, by the treaty of Paris, the whole establishment was broken up, the storehouses and docks ordered to be demolished, and the shipping and materials divided between the French and Dutch. These measures were forthwith carried into effect, with the exception of the destruction of the docks or basins, these being spared at the anxious solicitation of the citizens, who wished to preserve them for their trading vessels. These basins are situated within the eastern boundary of the town, and possess commodious entrances from the Scheldt. In winter, when the river is apt to bring down masses of ice, they serve the important purpose of protecting the shipping from injury. The quay forms a most agreeable promenade; when we visited it in the evening, we found hundreds of persons enjoying themselves in walking, or sitting on benches at the doors of the houses. Only a few vessels lay in the river or alongside the quay; altogether the number did not exceed seventeen, exclusive of barges, and a steam-vessel which was to sail next day for London. The trade of the town, which suffered by the events of the revolution of 1830, is, we were told, improving; and there can be no doubt that when the railway is completed to Cologne, a very considerable revival of traffic will be experienced. The town now contains about 77,000 inhabitants.

Being desirous of visiting the interior of the citadel of Antwerp, rendered famous by its protracted siege in 1832, we were fortunate in procuring a recommendation to the officer in command, and were therefore admitted on presenting ourselves at the entrance. I had expected to see something like a castellated fortress, and never was more surprised than when we were brought in front of certain green mounds, over the tops of which nothing could be seen. Pursuing a crooked path between the mounds, we are led by a wooden bridge across a broad wet ditch, thence through a covered way, which opens on another ditch beyond; having crossed that, we enter another vaulted passage in the walls, and are shortly in the interior of the garrison. Previous to the bombardment, the interior contained a populous village and church, besides barracks and storehouses. The whole of these were completely destroyed, and at present the visitor perceives only an open space, or smooth grassy park, with two or three recently-erected houses for the soldiery. During the siege, the French artillery fired sixty-four thousand shots, including nearly twenty thousand bombs which were thrown into the garrison. The Dutch are proud of the defence made by Chassé on this occasion; but as it could not, and really did not, tend to any useful purpose, we may be excused for viewing his conduct, or that of the parties for whom he acted, only as an example of irrational obstinacy.

Antwerp is usually styled the cradle of the Flemish school of painting, and it is more frequently visited for its treasures in this branch of the fine arts than for the inspection of the many scenes of historical interest by which it is surrounded. From the window of our hotel we looked across the Alée Verte, an open place lined with rows of trees, to an object which would have charmed the eye of an architect. This was the cathedral, with its tall elegant square tower, and richly decorated transepts, raised in airy proportions above the level of the houses in the Place. The cathedral of Notre Dame of Antwerp is one of the largest and finest specimens of the Gothic style of architecture now existing in the Netherlands. It was commenced in 1422, and finished in 1518, the building having thus required ninety-six years. Properly speaking, it was never finished: according to the original design, two towers were intended to be raised at the east end of the edifice; but only one, that on the right of the main doorway, has been erected, the other being cut short and brought to a point a little above the roof of the church. Notwithstanding this deficiency, the building is a wonder of architectural beauty, although almost entirely hung round with paltry parasitical structures

occupied as shops. The interior is one entire open sweep from end to end, except an inclosed space in the choir, containing the grand altar. The side aisles are occupied as chapels, each with an altar and pictorial embellishments. Entering by the door in the northern transept, and advancing a few steps, we have the vast open expanse before us, the choir on the right and the ample nave on the left. On the wall of the transepts on our right, one on each side of the choir, hang the two pictures of Rubens, which artists have made pilgrimages to visit for the last two hundred years. The first we come to is the Descent from the Cross, a picture justly esteemed as the masterpiece of Rubens, and which is in some degree familiar to the whole civilised world, in consequence of having been so frequently copied and engraved. The figure of the dead Christ, in the process of being lowered from the cross, is exceedingly faithful to nature, and forms the central and most striking object in the piece. The picture has two wings to fold over it, and on these are representations of the Salutation and Purification. We went to see this great production six times during our stay in Antwerp—the church being always open—and always with increased delight. The companion to the picture on the wall of the farther transept, represents the Elevation of the Cross, the body of Christ being seen nailed to it, while a number of figures are exerting themselves in raising it into its place. This piece, though less celebrated, is not less remarkable for fidelity of drawing than the other. The Assumption of the Virgin is a third picture by Rubens, placed over the grand altar; and a fourth, representing the Resurrection of Christ from the tomb, is pointed out in one of the side chapels. It would be an oft-repeated tale for me to make a single remark on these admirable productions. Nearly two hundred and fifty years have elapsed since they were painted; yet they are still in a good state of preservation, though a little faded and old in their appearance, and the substance on which they have been painted exhibits a few cracks. Before quitting the edifice, we mounted to nearly the summit of the tower, whence a view was obtained, including the borders of Holland, Bréda, and Bergen-op-Zoom, on the east, Brussels on the south, Ghent on the west, and the verge of the sea at Flushing on the north. The tower is 466 feet in height; it is at present, along with the eastern entrance, undergoing considerable repairs. General Chassé, it will be recollected, threatened to fire upon it from the citadel, in consequence of its having been made a station for peeping down upon his operations during the siege; fortunately, means were found to prevent him from fulfilling a threat, which, if executed, would have occasioned a public misfortune to all Europe.

We visited a number of other churches noted for pictures of Rubens, Vandyke, and other eminent artists, also for carvings in marble and oak, some of which, such as rails to altars twisted with garlands of flowers sculptured in pure white marble, were among the most elegant works of art which had ever come under our observation. The museum of Antwerp was likewise visited in the course of our ramble through the town. It contains a collection of pictures from suppressed churches and convents, including fourteen productions of Rubens; but though these have commanded universal admiration, we could not look upon them with any degree of complacency. There is a certain point, beyond which, in examining representations of crucifixions, martyrdoms, and other physical sufferings, the mind becomes bewildered with the reiteration of horrors, and the spectacle ceases to please. This point we had now gained, and were glad to make our escape from the collection into the open air.

Decayed as Antwerp seems to be, it is not without symptoms of liveliness and wealth. Lately a new theatre was erected; it is on a large and tasteful plan, fully equal to some of our best English establishments, and has a body of good actors. The dialogues are in French, as in the theatres at Brussels. The Bourse, or Exchange, where in days of yore five thousand merchants congregated daily, is an elegant old structure, with a central court and piazzas, which formed a model for the erection of the Royal Exchange in London. It is unfortunately placed in a confined situation, but is still resorted to for the purposes to which it was originally destined.

Living is said to be cheap at Antwerp. I inquired the price of beef, and other articles, which I found were much lower in price than in England, or even in the cheapest districts of Scotland. The price of bread may be readily learned in Holland or Belgium, as every baker is obliged by law to hang up a tariff of prices weekly over his door, for the public perusal. Bread is baked of six qualities, marked A, B, C, D, E, and F, and opposite each the charge per pound weight is inserted. The price, during my visit, varied from 8 to 18 cents per pound (there are 100 cents in 10d. English), which was considered to be more than usually dear.

We proceeded in a few hours by the railway to Ghent, at which living is generally allowed to be cheaper than at Antwerp. As we approach Ghent, the country appears more densely peopled than in the eastern provinces. The villages, embowered among trees, quickly succeed each other, and we pass different walled towns and localities celebrated in the wars of Marlborough. Ghent occupies a favourable situation for commerce, in the midst of the richest and most beautiful part of Flanders, on the banks of the Scheldt,

Lis, and Lieve, which here unite, and with their innumerable ramifications in the form of deep canals, pass through the town. The appearance of Ghent is very much like that of the Dutch towns, in which the walls of long rows of houses seem to grow out of the water; and hence, however well adapted the town may be for trade, I cannot conceive it to be suitable as a place of residence for persons accustomed to a dry climate. I believe that Ghent has upwards of a hundred bridges.

Ghent is the ancient capital of Flanders, and in its days of glory prior to the Spanish oppression, it was as populous and wealthy as Antwerp. At the commencement of the fifteenth century, it was distinguished as the chief seat of the cloth manufacture on the continent, and contained 40,000 weavers. These formed the strongest and boldest corporation of craftsmen in Europe, and to their invincible love of freedom are we owing much of the constitutional liberty which we now enjoy. The town, it is almost needless to relate, was effectually ruined by the measures of Charles V. and his son Philip II., and its revival is only of comparatively recent date. In 1801, the cotton manufacture was introduced into it by a native who had received instructions at Manchester, and succeeded in a very remarkable manner. There are now a number of cotton factories driven by steam-power, the indications of which, in the shape of tall brick chimneys, appear in all directions. The situation, on canals which bring the raw material to the very doors, the large population of the place (80,000), among whom are many poor, and the cheapness of living, render it advantageous for this or any other species of manufacture on a large scale. The railway to Ostend on the one hand, and to Liege and the Rhine on the other, must in time accelerate the progress of the town in all branches of traffic.

The spectacle of cotton-spinners placed amidst rows of antique buildings, old gloomy churches, and monasteries, is at variance with our ordinary conceptions of social improvement. We passed from the contemplation of spinning-jennies moved by steam-engines to that of an object of an entirely different character—the cathedral or church of St. Bavo, an edifice of the thirteenth century, enriched with twenty-four chapels, and possessing some carved rails and sculptures in marble, executed in a style of exquisite beauty. Before the grand altar in the choir stand four massive silver-gilt candlesticks, each at least five feet in height. They originally belonged to St. Paul's in London, and were sold during the protectorate of Cromwell. The tower of the cathedral is less conspicuous in the town than an isolated square turret, which is called the Belfry, and was anciently used as a post of outlook by the citizens. Its date is 1183. On the summit is a gilt dragon, which was originally brought from Constantinople during one of the crusades, by a detachment of the citizens of Bruges. At the conquest of Bruges by the inhabitants of Ghent—these towns were always fighting against each other—in 1445, the gilt dragon was carried off as a trophy, and has been here ever since.

Wandering from church to church, we at length came to the conventual establishment called the Béguinage. This is a very curious place. It consists of an entire square surrounded with houses, with a church in the open space in the centre; also several lanes lined with houses—the whole being enclosed, and entered by a single gateway. In front of the houses there was a secluding wall, in which were doors leading to the respective dwellings. Each door had inscribed upon it a particular motto or saint's name, by which, in all probability, the dwelling within was known. All these houses are residences of nuns, and the number of the establishments must be nearly one hundred—the whole, indeed, form a distinct town of nunneries. There were lately six hundred inmates, of whom we saw several, both here and on the streets, in their black stuff garments, and white head coverings; they were all elderly women, of a respectable appearance, and I was informed that they devote themselves to the duty of sick-nurses, and are to be found wherever there is either sorrow or suffering. Some are ladies possessing considerable wealth, and to these others act as attendants or domestics, but all meet on an equal footing in the religious services of the church. They are bound by no vow, as other nuns usually are, and may therefore be described as single women of a religious turn of mind, who devote themselves to works of charity and mercy.

Ghent contains a university, which was founded by William when king of the Netherlands; also a botanic garden, and several educational establishments, including a school of arts. It likewise possesses a Casino, situated in a pleasing part of the environs, and at which musical entertainments are given: it is surrounded by a garden for the recreation of visitors during fine weather.

Having spent a day in Ghent, we passed onward by the railway to Bruges, and thence to Ostend. This journey used formerly to be accomplished by a trekschuit on the canal, and was exceedingly tedious. By the railway train we were whirled along at a rapid rate, and at a very small expense. For a sum not exceeding four or five shillings, the traveller may now be transported from Ostend or Antwerp to Brussels; and as steam-vessels sail regularly from London to both of these ports, all difficulty of reaching the Belgian capital from England has vanished. The railway from Ghent to Ostend proceeds directly through

a suburb of Bruges, a number of houses having been taken down to admit the line of road. In passing, we were a little amused at seeing a monk or friar in his brown tunic, with shaven crown and beads, standing in the gap of one of the destroyed buildings, contemplating the ruin which had been made: the line, we were told, had cut through the centre of his monastery.

Bruges is a town of great antiquity, and has been less benefited by the revival of commerce in modern times than any other of the old Flemish cities. The streets, which are neat, clean, and dull, possess many remarkable edifices of antique Spanish architecture. The place is chiefly known in the present day for its retired character and its suitability as a place of living for those English who wish to make slender incomes go a great way in housekeeping.

On approaching Ostend, at the distance of sixteen miles from Bruges, we perceive before us the long line of rough sandy hillocks which the winds have brought up from the sea-shore, and in the midst of these dreary wilds is built the town of Ostend, an opening being left for the entrance of the sea into the harbour. Ostend, which is strongly walled and defended, is a regularly built plain town, not over cleanly, and contains about 30,000 inhabitants. The entrance to its port is a flat sandy beach at low water, and hence it is badly adapted for shipping, at least for steam-vessels, whose passengers cannot brook delay. We nevertheless found the harbour full of shipping, and a general appearance of traffic. The number of vessels which had entered the port during one month previous to our visit, was 85, with a burden of 10,441 tons. As a place of residence for strangers, Ostend is in no respect fitted. Like all other travellers, we remained in it only so long as was absolutely necessary. By one of the excellent Post-Office steam-packets we proceeded on the morning after our arrival across the Channel to Dover, which we reached in seven hours.

NOTE.

The narrative of my excursion in Holland, the countries on the Rhine, and Belgium, has now been brought to a conclusion, not without a fear that I have tired the patience of the reader. My object has been to describe simply what I saw, avoiding as far as possible matters of trivial detail, or those which have been previously described, and taking care to express no rash opinion on the subjects which came immediately under my observation. As respects the important subject of education in Holland and Belgium, which chiefly engaged my attention, I have, for the sake of brevity, excluded a number of illustrations and remarks; these, however, with some other additions, will be given to the public in a revised edition of my tour, which will appear, in the form of a volume of small compass, in the course of a few weeks.

W. C.

CONDITION OF THE LOWER CLASSES IN A GREAT CITY.

THE Report of the University Hospital and Dispensary of Glasgow for 1837, recently read at an annual meeting of the subscribers, where the Principal of the university was in the chair, affords some valuable light on what is to most persons a subject of a very obscure nature, the circumstances in which the great bulk of the labouring classes of a large city live. Of the correctness of this Report, we presume there can be no doubt, as it is drawn up under the care of intelligent and every way respectable individuals, who are in the constant habit of visiting the sick poor at their own houses. "The tales of distress," says the Report, "sometimes told at the dispensary, and the visits made to the sick poor at their own houses, have directed the physician (Dr Cumin) to several circumstances in the condition of the working classes of this city, to which it may not be improper to advert, as they have a considerable influence over the health, as well as the morals, of these people. The bye-streets, lanes, and alleys of the city and suburbs of Glasgow, are, with few exceptions, exceedingly ill paved, therefore very difficult to be kept clean. They are also very badly lighted, and some of them altogether without lamps, while the attention of the police is directed chiefly to the main streets of the town, neglecting the poorer and more obscure districts. The effect of such a state of matters on the health and moral habits of these people cannot be otherwise than highly injurious.

Many of the dwellings of the labouring poor are quite ruinous, unfit for lodging human beings, and such as would be condemned by any board of inspectors. Their dwellings are not only very wretched, but the rents paid for them are exorbitantly high, partly from the small number of houses for the poor, and partly from the difficulty of collecting the rents. Single rooms are sometimes let for five pounds a-year, and miserable cellars for two or three. The rents are collected by the fortnight, or even the week, and sometimes even in advance; thus, the rents paid by the labouring people are exceedingly high, and charged at the rate of thirteen months to the year. Great numbers of the labouring poor, consisting of different families, are often crowded together in one apartment, with little regard to the distinctions of age and sex; and the consequences, as might be expected, are highly prejudicial to the health and to the moral feelings and habits of the individuals. The want of proper dwellings for the poor, and the high rents exacted for those which they now occupy, naturally suggest the idea of forming building societies, for supplying the deficiency at more moderate charges: and there seems

no reason to doubt, that, by judicious management, these objects might be successfully attained without any considerable pecuniary sacrifice, or perhaps even with some small profit.

The indigent condition of the lower classes, and the miserable dwellings into which they are huddled, oblige them to purchase their provisions and fuel in small quantities, sometimes on credit, and therefore at prices which would be deemed quite exorbitant by the wealthy inhabitants of this city. Hence their small pittance of wages becomes still less adequate to the supply of their reasonable wants. The indigence of the labouring classes in Glasgow is much greater than the rest of the community are aware of—a very small interval indeed separates them from complete destitution, which is immediately produced by the sickness of the head of the family, or his want of employment. It would be a melancholy and painful subject of statistical inquiry to endeavour to ascertain how many individuals in this great city, with all its masses of wealth, get up in the morning without knowing where they are to find a meal, and how many actually cannot obtain food without having recourse to begging or theft. The wretchedness of the houses occupied by the labouring classes where they are crowded together in such numbers, causes them to congregate together in the streets after the day's work is done, or if they have a few pence, it leads them to the tavern or drinking shop. Few of them, in fact, can afford to enter a tavern; they are obliged, therefore, to swallow their glass of spirits in some open shop, lounging by the counter, or against some bench or empty cask. The vice of intemperance is indeed making frightful advances among the lower classes of our population of both sexes, and it has proved the most powerful of all the causes of their demoralisation and misery, and the prevalence of disease. Even the children are taught to suck in the poison; several instances have occurred at the dispensary where mothers and nurses have confessed the practice of giving ardent spirits to infants, and on one occasion the writer of these remarks saw a wretched woman in a dram-shop give a little girl of five years the glass, to drain from it the last drops. But if we look well into the condition of the working classes, the temptations held out to them, and the facilities of obtaining ardent spirits, we shall perhaps be inclined to censure them with less unsparring severity.

Go where we choose, in every quarter of this vast city numerous shops for the sale of ardent spirits are to be met with. No sooner is a new building erected in the place of some ruinous edifice, than splendid shops are immediately opened in it for the retail of intoxicating liquors. In the streets most frequented by the poor, they are to be seen brilliantly illuminated with gas, even at the early hour when the cotton-mill workers are repairing to their factories. It is not, therefore, matter for wonder that these poor people, scantily clothed, and shivering in the morning air, should be tempted to warm their stomachs with a glass of spirits; for nothing which they can obtain at that hour, and for the small sum which they can command, will produce the same grateful feeling. It would be a wise employment of the funds of temperance societies, if, instead of printing tracts which are seldom read, or establishing coffee-houses for those in better circumstances, they were to open small shops for the poor, where they might at all times obtain for a trifle hot broth, hot tea, or coffee, or chocolate, or ginger tea, or a glass of hartshorn cordial, such as we find useful in weaning drunkards from their vicious habits. Much benefit would also accrue from such an increase of the malt duty, and the duty on distilled spirits, as should render them less easily obtained. Petitions from the intelligent classes of the community, calling on the legislature to stay the progress of intemperance by such means as these, could not fail to be listened to." Perhaps one cause of the intemperance of the working and lower classes in Scotland, is the want of those recreations and spectacles which they enjoy in some other countries; in corroboration of which it may be remarked, that on the occasion of the rejoicings for her present majesty's coronation, when the people were treated with various shows and innocent entertainments, less intoxication was observed both in this city and in London, than at any former similar festival. If we could succeed by the means which have now been proposed, or by any other, in materially ameliorating the condition of the labouring classes, and in checking the diffusion of intemperance, there is good ground for believing that disease would be less frequent—that crime of every description would diminish—and that the soil would be found prepared for the labours of the ministers of religion, which, it is admitted, are now so deplorably unsuccessful in extending the blessings of Christianity among the lowest ranks of our population."

* We take the liberty of dissenting from these proposals. It is well ascertained, that if the duty on spirits were raised, the business of illicit distillation would immediately commence. The true way to eradicate habits of drunkenness consists neither in raising at spirit-dealers, nor at low duties on liquors, for these are but results of a cause. We must abolish the cause, and then the results will disappear. The true plan will consist in cultivating the minds and improving the physical condition of the people; unless this be done on a scale only limited by the extent of the whole nation, habits of intemperance and disregard of the decencies of life, will, as a matter of course, continue to flourish.—Ed. C. J.

SCRAPS FROM AMERICAN PAPERS.
As collected in New York Mirror and New Yorker.

SELF-MADE MEN.

You may take the whole population of Maryland, and select from it the fifty men who are most distinguished for talents, or any description of public usefulness, and, I will answer for it, they are all, every one of them, men who began the world without a dollar. Look into the public councils of the nation, and who are they that take the lead there? They are men who made their own fortunes—self-made men, who began with nothing. The rule is universal. It pervades our courts, state and federal, from the highest to the lowest. It is true of all the professions. It is so now; it has been so at any time since I have known the public men of this state or the nation; and it will be so while our present institutions continue. You must throw a man upon his own resources to bring him out. The struggle which is to result in eminence is too arduous, and must be continued too long, to be encountered and maintained voluntarily, or unless as a matter of life and death. He who has fortune to fall back upon will slacken from his efforts, and finally retire from the competition. With me it is a question whether it is desirable that a parent should be able to leave his son any property at all. You will have a large fortune, and I am sorry for it, as it will be the spoiling of a good lawyer. These are my deliberate sentiments, and I shall be rejoiced to find, in your instance, that I shall have been mistaken.—Clement Falconer.

CROCKERY, DELF, AND CHINA.

A lady, proud of her rank and title, was one day decanting on the superiority of the nobility over the rest of mankind, to a large company of visitors. Says she, "I think we may very well compare the three classes of people, nobility, gentry, and commonalty, to the three classes of tea-drinking utensils, china, delf, and crockery." A few minutes elapsed, when one of the company expressed a wish to see the lady's little girl. "Tell the maid, John," said she to the footman, "to bring the little dear." The fellow, wishing to expose his mistress's ridiculous pride, cried, loud enough to be heard by all the company, "Crockery! bring down little China."

LIVING UPON AIR.

A queer idea has somehow got abroad that periodical proprietors, paper-makers, printers, pressmen, and all the multifarious, viviparous, warm-blooded animals connected with publishing matters, share the properties of the camelion. There can be no greater mistake than this. Whatever theories may exist upon the subject, it is a well-ascertained fact that none of these classes of people are exempt from the ordinary laws of humanity, but are compelled, in order to preserve their vitality, to repair the waste of nature from time to time with substantial aliment. But this zoological absurdity is not more preposterous than another dogma which seems to obtain among some of our delinquent agents and subscribers. They seem to think that a periodical is one of the lower order of vegetables, which, when once planted, grows and flourishes of itself, and drops its blossoms and fruits at their door without any expense of care and culture. How such a stupid belief can obtain currency among people so enlightened as the readers of the *Mirror*, we are wholly at a loss to determine; but we earnestly hope that every one of our subscribers to whom the suspicion attaches of sharing such laughable ignorance, will at once exonerate himself, and prove his undoubted intelligence by forwarding the funds, which will enable us to go on cheerfully, administering to his entertainment and delight in these columns.

THE BEST WAY TO TEACH.

It was once said by the French philosopher Diderot, "that the best way to educate a child is to tell it stories, and let it tell stories to you." There is so much true philosophy in this remark, that we will extend it a little. There is a school-room education, and an ambulating or walking education; the one is obtained out of the book on the bench, the other from walking among and talking of things. And we believe that this out-door instruction has been too much neglected; education having been conducted on the principle of looking out of the window at things, instead of visiting objects, and learning their properties and uses. The student, for example, looking out of his college window at the horse, can give five or six names to the animal: one in Latin, one in Greek, another in German, and then the French name, &c. The stable boy can give but one name; yet which knows the most of the properties, nature, disposition, and uses of the horse? Education consists too much in merely naming things, when it should relate more to their properties and uses. It should connect words with ideas, and ideas, as much as the nature of the subject will allow of, with objects. If we instruct children orally while visiting nature, words, ideas, and objects, will naturally be more in connection with each other than the school-room lesson can make them. And the teacher should take occasion to instruct in the fields, in ship-yards, in the crowded streets, and in the pathway of canals and railroads. He should talk on all these subjects, and elicit from the children their own impressions, inquiries, and reflections. He should talk and walk, and let the children talk and walk more, in the process of education, than has been the practice with the majority of instructors.

A PRACTICAL JOKE.

A gentleman of considerable talent as an orator became a member of a legislative body in one of the eastern states. In speaking, he was addicted to an odd habit of handling his spectacles; first placing them on his nose, suffering them to remain a minute or two, throwing them upon his forehead, and finally folding them up and laying them before him upon the desk. One day, a very important question came up for consideration, and he commenced a speech in opposition. A friend to the proposed measure, who was a most incorrigible wag withal, determined to spoil the effect of the honourable member's remarks, and, accordingly, before he entered the house, provided himself with a dozen pairs of spectacles. The

member commenced his speech, with his usual ability. Only a few minutes had elapsed before he was at work with his spectacles, and finally got them upon his forehead. At this juncture, our wag, who stood ready, laid another pair upon the desk before the speaker. These were taken up, and, by regular gradations, gained a place on his forehead, by the side of the others. A third, fourth, and fifth pair, was disposed of in the same manner. A smile settled upon the countenances of the honourable members, which gradually lengthened into a grin; and at last, when the speaker had warmed into one of his most patriotic and eloquent sentences, he deposited a sixth pair with the others, and there was one long and loud peal of laughter from all quarters of the hall—president, clerks, members, joined in chorus. The speaker himself looked around in astonishment at this curious interruption; but, accordingly, raising his hand, he grasped the spectacles, and the whole force of the joke rushed upon his mind. He dashed the glasses upon the floor, took up his hat, and left the hall. The bill passed by a triumphant majority, probably in consequence of the gentleman's very silly and useless habit.

VALUE OF A ROPE.

When the Killarney steamer was lately wrecked upon the coast of Ireland, with the loss of twenty-four lives, a few of the crew and passengers succeeded in getting upon a rock about two hundred yards from the shore. The humans in the vicinity flocked to the spot, and after twenty-four hours of constant exertion, succeeded in getting out a rope to the sufferers. Night closed upon their labours, however, before one of them could be got to land, and the next morning it was found that the cord had been cut and *stolen* (!) by some of the wreckers of the coast. The delay in procuring another was fatal to a poor carpenter, who died from the prolonged exposure to the elements; and it is to be hoped that the rope by which the unfortunate mariners were ultimately relieved, will be applied to an equally humane use in stringing up the wretches who could commit such a theft, perilling the lives of fourteen suffering human beings for a few pounds of cordage!

A CARD PARTY.

It is related of Madame du Deffan, that three of her friends brought a card-table to her bed-side, at her request, in her last illness, she taking a hand. As she happened to die in the midst of an interesting game, her partner played dummy for her, and thus the three quietly played it out, and settled the stakes before they called the servants to notify them of the very important demise of their mistress. Shocking as is this incident, it is trivial in comparison with one that is said to have occurred at Albany many years since. There was at that time a low-aved, peak-roofed, stone-built inn, situated in the upper part of the city, known as the "Colony;" a place much frequented by Schenectady teamsters and Mohawk boatmen, before the completion of Clinton's grand canal had caused that dissipated mongrel race to be superseded in their vocation. At this inn one day a man by the name of Derrick Helfenstein, but better known as "Dirk Hell of German Flats," had been seized with convulsions amid a drunken frolic, and expired during the fit, with his limbs all twisted and knotted together by the fierce muscular action incident to his disease. In Albany, at that time, the Dutch custom of several friends of the deceased remaining all night in the same room with the body, and keeping their vigil until the moment of interment, was always strictly observed; coffee, and mulled wine, with *dote*, or dead-cakes, and other refreshments, being generally provided by the nearest relatives to cheer the gloomy duty of the watchers. Dirk Hell (or Helldirk, as he was quite as often called), though a wretched vagabond, had still some whom he called friends, among the reckless and gambling crew with whom he chiefly associated; and as the landlord of the inn where he died could not well refuse the customary refreshment of liquor upon an occasion like this, three idle hangers-on of the establishment readily consented to honour the obsequies of Dirk by the usual vigil. The dead man, in the meantime, was duly laid out; but the distorted shape which his body had assumed in the death agony, made it necessary to use great force in straightening out the corpse, and recourse was had to cords to bind down his limbs to the decent form it was desirable they should assume. This disagreeable task being accomplished, the three friends of the gambler, when night came on, took possession of the apartment where he was laid out. With characteristic recklessness, they had brought a pack of cards into the chamber of death, and after taking a glass of liquor all round, and drinking the memory of their comrade with some unfeeling allusion to his sudden fate, the three profligates sat down to a game of cards upon the foot of his bed. Four hands were then dealt; that of "dummy" falling almost upon the feet of the corpse, and the other three upon the opposite sides and extreme end of the bed around which the players were thus arranged. The game proceeded apparently to the satisfaction of all parties; each of them by turns playing the hand of dummy until drinking and gambling had carried them deep into the middle watches of the night. Some slight dispute, however, now occurred as to who should play the next dummy. Words waxed high, and the two opposite players both attempted to seize upon the vacant hand at the same time, while the third, impatient at the contention, exclaimed, "I wish that Helldirk would spring up and take the cards from both of you!" The wretch had hardly uttered the wish, before the cords which bound the corpse gave way with a sharp cracking noise, the struggle about the feet having probably disarranged them—and the distorted body, released from its ligatures, bounded forward in resuming the form under which life had left it, and seated itself upon its haunches with knees drawn up to its chin, arms akimbo, and hideously distended jaws, in the midst of the appalled and disconcerted trio. The three wretches were said never to have played a game of cards afterwards.

IMITATION WINES.

It is not perhaps generally known that very large establishments exist at Cetto and Marseilles in the south

of France, for the manufacture of every description of wines. Some of these establishments are on so large a scale as to give employment to an equal if not greater number of persons than our large breweries. It is no uncommon occurrence with speculators engaged in this sort of illicit traffic, to purchase and ship imitation wines, fabricated in the places named, to Madeira, where, by collusion with persons in the custom-house department of the island, the wines are landed in the entrepôt, and thence, after being branded with the usual marks of the genuine Madeira vintage, reshipped principally, it is believed, for the United States. The scale of gratuity for this sort of work to the officials interested, may be estimated by the fact, that on one occasion seventy pipes were thus surreptitiously passed at a charge of one thousand dollars. It is a circumstance no less singular, that the same manoeuvre is said to be commonly carried on with counterfeit wine made up in Cetto and Marseilles, and thence dispatched to Oporto, where the same process of landing, branding, and reshipment as genuine port, is gone through, the destination of this spurious article being most generally the United States. Such is the extent of this nefarious commerce, that one individual alone has been in the habit of dispatching, four times in the year, twenty-five thousand bottles of Champagne, each shipment of wines not the produce of the Champagne districts, but fabricated in these wine factories.

AN ODD KIND OF DEATH.

When Mr Kennedy, the author of "Horse Shoe Robinson," was making his eloquent speech in Congress against the sub-treasury bill, he spoke of the eccentric scruples of certain Virginia politicians in regard to a national bank. "Let Virginia," said he, "give up her dialectics, renounce her spirit of dissertation and debate, and betake herself to commerce and manufactures—let her do this, and thrive; let her neglect it, and it may be her fate." [while the orator paused, Mr Wise finished the sentence for him by saying, "to die of an abstraction."] "I adopt," said Mr Kennedy, "the gentleman's expression, though I hope a better fate awaits her, 'to die of an abstraction.'"

NEW COPYRIGHT BILL.

Edinburgh, February 27, 1839.

THE new bill for altering the law of copyright differs from the former in a few particulars. The clause for giving back assigned copyrights to the representatives of authors, at the end of the presently existing periods, is abandoned—the opposition of the publishing world having been found too strong to allow that part of the measure to pass. Mr Talfourd now proposes that the present periods shall only be extended in the case of books, the copyright of which has never been assigned away by the author—such extension to be for sixty years from the date of the author's death. The following is the clause of the bill which makes this provision:—

"Be it enacted, That in all cases in which the copyright in any book shall be subsisting at the time of passing this act, and shall be the property of the author thereof, or of the personal representative, legatee, widow, or next of kin of such author, or other person who may have acquired the same in the course of the administration of the estate of such author, or of any person to whom such author shall have assigned the same in consideration of natural love and affection, such copyright shall continue and belong to the party so entitled to the same and his assigns until the expiration of *sixty* years, commencing at the death of such author, subject nevertheless to any charge subsisting upon the same, and to any licence or contract granted or made relating thereto, which shall remain in force according to the true intent thereof."

Not alone, however, in cases where the author has retained the whole copyright in his own hands, does Mr Talfourd propose this extension. He provides that it shall be extended also in cases where a part has been assigned away; the holder or holders of the assignment being endowed with the same advantages as the representatives of the authors, in proportion to the amount of their share of the copyright.

The bill contains a cumbersome residue of provisions, amongst which is one to the effect, that, hereafter, in respect of books, of which the present periods of copyright have expired, and the new periods are running, it shall be lawful for any one to reprint a book which has been out of print for five years, provided he give a twelve-month's notice by advertisement of such being his intention; and the book which he thus reprints thenceforth becomes his copyright, with all the advantages conferred by the present act!

It would almost appear as if there were a predestination to absurdity awaiting all attempts to legislate on copyright. Whether there be so or not, we feel the absurdity of the present attempt so deeply, as to be scarcely able to speak of it in a serious manner. The public are well aware that almost all books are assigned by their authors to men who make a business of pushing them off, as the phrase goes, into the world. Such assignments take place by virtue of what is the nearest thing to a positive necessity—not the necessity which authors generally are under of raising as large a present sum as possible on their books, but the necessity there is for the

exertions of a tradesman, deeply interested in the speculation, to make almost any book sell or keep its place in the market. Now, it has been clearly shown, that, when a publisher buys the copyright of a book from an author, he never contemplates benefit from it for so many as even twenty-eight years, nor for the half of that time, but would give as much for a copyright which he was to have exclusively for only twelve years, as for one of three or six times the period—always providing that he was not, at the end of the period, to be deprived of the power of publishing in common with others. Certainly, there are a few cases in which popular and profitable books have been kept in the possession of the authors, and in which, of course, the bill would operate to the benefit of the posterity of these authors; but such cases are so extremely rare, as to require to be legislated for rather as an exception than as a rule: and it is, after all, very doubtful if the protection of a monopoly for twenty-eight years, or for life, be not a sufficient remuneration to the producer, and if the public have not then a claim to the free use of the book, in consideration of the very protection of that monopoly for so long a period. Amongst the very few literary productions of the last forty years, which have not been assigned away to publishers, are, we understand, the works of Messrs Southey and Wordsworth, the cause of the non-assignment in their case being the very valid one, that the works were at first unsaleable. It chances that, from a change of taste, these books have now become popular, their authors, meanwhile, having become old; so that, in the course of nature, the copyright must soon expire, unless the present legal term be protracted. It is universally rumoured that it is specially with a regard to these few peculiar cases that the present attempt has been made to alter the law of copyright—that is to say, for the sake of Mr Wordsworth, Mr Southey, and perhaps one or two other persons, whose works have been rather late in obtaining general approbation, the whole system of cheap reprinting, which has been the chief means of supplying books to the middle and poorer classes for centuries, is to be completely demolished. Was there ever such a vast amount of means required before to bring about an end so small? Could there be a more striking converse of Mr Bentham's celebrated maxim? "The smallest happiness of the smallest number" must surely be Mr Talfourd's philosophy.

Quite in accordance with this view of the principles of the learned gentleman, is his provision for cases of partial assignment. Rather than that the least fraction of a copyright that has remained with an author should be lost to those whose interests he seeks to advance, he is willing that the publishers and their heirs should have the rest. Thus, if Mr Wordsworth had retained only a tenth part of his copyrights, while Messrs A, B, C, and Company had obtained the rest, these gentlemen and their heirs and assigns are to enjoy nine times as much as the poet's children and grandchildren, and that for the same length of time. In such a case, supposing the profit from the publication to be £1000 per annum, the posterity of the booksellers realise altogether £54,000, and the posterity of William Wordsworth £6000, the books being all the time preserved as dainties for the rich, and kept effectually out of the hands of the poor—certainly a very handsome arrangement for Messrs A, B, C, and Company, who, let it be marked, did not pay one penny to the poet for this long-drawn-out benefit. The absurdity of the provision is shown in an equally striking point of view, if we suppose a bookseller thus rewarded for buying a *share* of a copyright, whereas, if he had patronised the author so heartily as to buy the *whole*, his privilege would have expired at twenty-eight years from publication, or at the death of the author—sixty years of fat monopoly being thus lost to him for his generosity.

The clause admitting of republication by any one after the work has been five years out of print, is owing, evidently, to the fears which were expressed last session as to the possible suppression of books. Of this clause we shall only say, that to men of business it must appear utterly impracticable. Not one republication would take place in consequence of it, except it were in some very peculiar case, where some considerable body of men were determinedly anxious, for moral or political reasons, to republish. We mean that no books would be republished, through favour of this clause, in the ordinary way of mercantile speculation.

We might protract these remarks, but it is surely unnecessary. The fundamental as well as superficial errors of this bill are so glaring, that, while they only can provoke derision from individuals acquainted with the business of bookselling, they must be readily appreciated by the mass of society. We trust, confidently, that the copyright bill of the next session will be one for giving exclusive satisfaction to Messrs Southey, Wordsworth, and the one or two other parties concerned, so that their interests may be reasonably protected, without, for that end, working ten thousand times greater evil than their works ever will effect good.

EDINBURGH: Printed and Published by W. and R. CHAMBERS, 19, Waterloo Place—Agents, W. S. ORR, London; G. YOUNG, Dublin; J. MACLEOD, Glasgow; and sold by all booksellers.

Complete sets of the Journal are always to be had from the publishers or their agents; also, any odd numbers to complete sets. Persons requiring their volumes bound along with title-pages and contents, have only to give them into the hands of any bookseller, with orders to that effect.